
WELCOME TO WORSHIP TODAY!

We are **delighted** that you are here in celebration and worship at St. John UCC. The members and friends of our faith community hope that you will encounter God in a meaningful and profound way, and that God’s Spirit will inspire you today to live your faith out loud.

We hope that you want to discover more about the congregation and its ministry in the community of Freeport, across our state and nation, and around the world. Please ask one of our ushers or visit us:

on the Web: www.stjohnuccfreeport.org

on Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport

For our younger guests, Worship Enrichment “*Busy Bags*” are available in the Narthex. These are located at the counter outside of the Chapel Hearth Room. Check in with an usher to organize a bag!

Parents and guardians are also welcome to use Room S3, the Infant Room, to care for their families as needed. There is a television in the room to view the worship service in real time.

Assisted Listening Devices are located at the Sound Board in the back of the Sanctuary. Earpiece and “Induction Loops” for hearing aids are both available. Please ask an usher for assistance in their use.

Please remember to return your name tag on your way home. We will have them waiting for your return next week!

If you cannot join us in person, you will always have a front row seat on our live stream at facebook.com/stjohnuccfreeport/live.

Scan this code to access our Online Giving Portal:



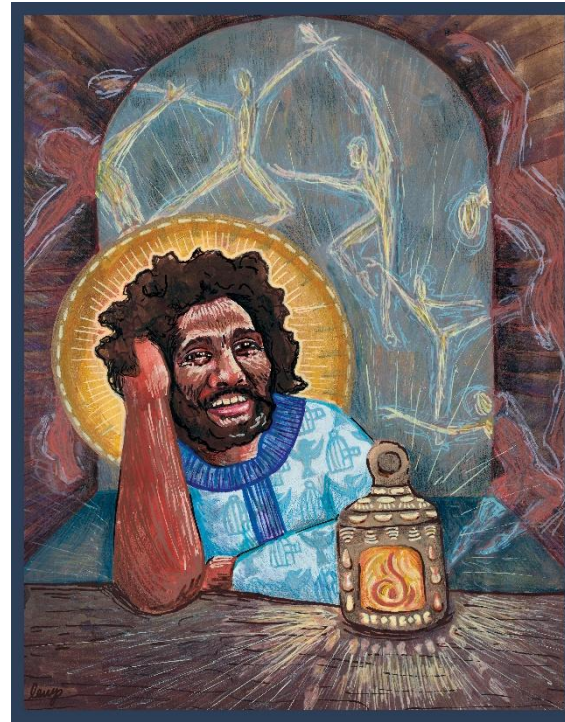
We thank you for your continued
generous support of St. John UCC.

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Hope Like a Dancer | Lauren Wright Pittman
Gouache, paint pens, colored pencils, and ink on paper

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1010 South Park Boulevard Freeport, IL 61032
815.235.2824 • www.stjohnuccfreeport.org



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PEACE

“When we’re running out of hope, God is at work”

December 7, 2025 • 10:00 am

WELCOMING MUSIC AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

All Earth Is Hopeful

arr. Lynn L. Petersen

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Thompson Brandt

One: Family of faith, God is at work!

All: God is healing and creating,

One: redeeming and dreaming,

All: calling and sending,

One: listening and loving.

All: Yes, indeed, God is at work!

One: So may we worship our God who never gives up.

**All: May we worship our God who holds onto hope,
and watch peace enter through the candle’s light.**

*HYMN

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

NCH #122, on screen

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

** An asterisk is an invitation to rise as one is able (in body or spirit).
Please silence your mobile devices before the beginning of worship.*

GATHERING PRAYER

Lighting of Advent Candles

One: In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of peace?

All: We see glimmers of peace in the quiet of early morning, when people shake hands, when loved ones say they’re sorry, and when the church sings together.

One: You are right. Even in a fearful world, peace is all around us.
John the Baptist knew peace.
Even when his world was turned upside down, he found peace through trusting God.
In the middle of fear, he asked of Jesus, “Are you the one we’ve been expecting?”
trusting that God’s light to break into our hurting and healing world.

The Candle of Peace is lit.

One: Today we light the candle of peace as a reminder of this good news.
May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, peace is present.

We only have to look for it.

All: Let Peace light our way. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Response We Are a People of Hope, v.2 TABLE OF GRACE
Words: B. Hamm, © 2009 Hope Publishing, on screen

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 3:1-12 NRSV, Updated Edition

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Tim Ebbers

The Prayer of our Savior

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

ANTHEM

Hope Waits for Us at Advent Amanda Udis-Kessler
Songs of the Spirit

GOD’S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:1-11 NRSV, Updated Edition

MESSAGE

The Baptist Rev. Hank Fairman

*HYMN

Looking Out a Prison Window IRBY
Words: Anna Strickland, © 2025, A Sanctified Art, on screen

PRESENTING OUR HEARTS AND GIFTS TO GOD

Gathering the Gifts with Praise

Offering Song We Wait for God Kervin/Park/Reynolds

Doxology (CH #48 lyrics, on screen) OLD 100TH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Christ, all creatures here below!
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Sharing Celebrations and Concerns

Invitation to the Table

One: But here at this table, you never have to wonder.
Here at this table, there is enough room,
enough food, enough love for everyone.

All: Here at this table, Jesus is standing up on his chair,
waving his hands over his head,
saying to each of you, “I saved you a seat!”

One: Here at this table, you are wanted and welcomed.
You are safe and loved.

All: Here at this table, you belong. We belong.
There is no need for fear here,
for this is a joyful feast, and every one is invited.

Communion Prayer

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing the Elements

Christ’s table is open to all who wish to participate.
Red Wine and White Grape juice and all bread is gluten free
meeting the personal and dietary needs of every person.

Please take a serving cup and wait to join everyone gathered in the Sanctuary
and at home in communion as one body in Christ’s extravagant welcome and love.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (speaking together)

Loving God,
In a world racked with fear, you gather us together.
You set the table. You meet us here.
You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits.
You remind us that this is a joyful feast,
and that fear cannot win every time.
So with renewed courage, with renewed hope,
with renewed conviction,
send us out into the world.
Help us to feed others as you have fed us.
With gratitude we pray, awaiting the light of Christ to light our
Advent. Amen.

*HYMN On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry PUER NOBIS
WAR #156

*BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE Comfort, Comfort Now My People GENEVAN 42
WAR #155, v. I

*POSTLUDE Comfort All My People arr. Craig Phillips

St. John United Church of Christ – Freeport, IL

an Open and Affirming, Racial Justice Congregation,
where God is Still Speaking

twelve songs of Christmas

*Does holiday music strike a chord with you?
Come share in a community music celebration
of instruments, choirs, and much more!*

Sunday, 12/7/2025
2:00pm



1010 South Park Boulevard Freeport, IL 61032
815.235.2824 • www.stjohnuccfreeport.org

Musical Celebration, 12/7, 2:00pm

Does holiday music strike a chord with you? Come share in a gathering of instruments, choirs, and much more at the Third Annual "Twelve Songs of Christmas" Music Celebration! Our annual free-will offering for the *FSD 145 Shoe Fund* will be taken, providing winter-safe shoes to our community youth.



"What do you fear?" Adult Faith Formation Series

Come join the Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation group as we walk through Advent together. Christina Ables Fairman and Lisa Shcubert will facilitate the journey with A Sanctified Art's *What do you fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent* companion study as our guide.

12/7 – "When we're running out of hope, God is at work"

12/14 – "Even in our fear, we are called forward"

12/21 – "When you're afraid, give me your hand"

Please join us for one, two, three, or all four weeks of this conversation. And when you can't be there, or if you'd like to engage in additional Advent devotional time on your own, you can also explore *What Do You Fear?* personal devotional, available to pick up in the Narthex.

We can't wait to see you on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM in the Chapel Hearth Room!

Soon and Very Soon UCC Advent Devotional



The UCC *Stillspeaking Writers' Group* invites you to plan your Advent observances around the theme, *Soon and Very Soon*. The theme acknowledges our need for radical hope and encourages us to prepare for God's best. Find your copy on the Narthex Table.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

Holiday sweets and treats will be available today after church, with proceeds supporting our congregation's mission and ministry. Please head to Fellowship Hall and stock up on your favorite holiday treats!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

You are invited to "remember a loved one or honor a family member" by placing a poinsettia in our sanctuary at Christmas. We are offering 6" potted plants at \$20 each. Order forms are available in the Narthex or in the Office. Please return your form to the church office by 12/8.



MARDI GRAS PLANNING MEETING: 12/10, 6:30pm

There will be a planning meeting for our upcoming Mardi Gras Potluck and Bingo on 12/10 at 6:30 pm at the home of Judi Buus. Please see Judi for more information.



CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY, 12/21

Come share in the warmth of worship in your favorite Christmas Sweater as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The more unique, the more we celebrate with you!



THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, 12/21, 4:00 PM

The Wellness Ministry is hosting a time for worship on 12/21 at 4:00 pm. During a season whose signs demand us to be merry and bright, this worship intentionally creates a space for people to acknowledge the shadows that grief and loss cast in our lives.

Together during The Longest Night Service, we will reserve time to acknowledge the loss we are feeling and look toward the comfort, hope, and healing that comes with the birth of Jesus and the steadily growing sun which will begin to shine a little longer with each coming day.



FACC FOOD PANTRY PANTRY BAG COLLECTION

Thank you all for your generous support of the Pantry Bag collection! We will keep collecting and bagging through the end of December, and work with the FACC Food Pantry on the best way to continue our support in the January and beyond.